

RE: Coutts Convoy Blockade - Leadership and Organization Analysis

From: Marlin Degrand <marlin.degrand@gov.ab.ca>
To: Bill McAuley <bill.mcauley@gov.ab.ca>; Peter Lemieux <peter.lemieux@gov.ab.ca>; Dwayne Lakusta <dwayne.lakusta@gov.ab.ca>; Farooq Sheikh <farooq.sheikh@gov.ab.ca>; Dennis Cooley <dennis.cooley@gov.ab.ca>
Date: Tue, 01 Feb 2022 17:02:45 -0700

Thank you Bill, I know you are sharing with police.

Dennis,

PSIO's early analysis on the situation in Coutts.

Marlin

Classification: Protected A

From: Bill McAuley <bill.mcauley@gov.ab.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2022 4:03 PM
To: Peter Lemieux <peter.lemieux@gov.ab.ca>; Marlin Degrand <Marlin.Degrand@gov.ab.ca>; Dwayne Lakusta <Dwayne.Lakusta@gov.ab.ca>; Farooq Sheikh <Farooq.Sheikh@gov.ab.ca>
Subject: Coutts Convoy Blockade - Leadership and Organization Analysis

Sir,

Preliminary PSIO assessment:

Based on reports from law enforcement partners and some social media research, I've found the following. Note that all analysis is preliminary and assessments are made with **LOW CONFIDENCE** due to time and capacity restraints.

1. BLOCKADE LEADERSHIP:

- a. **There does not appear to be centralized leadership of the blockade.** The blockade action emerged from the "Freedom Convoy" movement, and appears to have been semi-spontaneously organized by a coalition of individuals and small groups. No spokespeople are delivering consistent messaging on social media platforms, and a variety of individuals seem to have spontaneously organized support or logistics operations for the blockade participants. Large social media groups are lightly moderated or unmoderated, and there does not appear to be control over messaging or overt coordination of effort. Reporting from media indicates some prominent individuals within the blockade may have formed a committee to make decisions about the blockade, although they do not appear to exert any influence outside of the blockade location. Some mention has been made about coordinated negotiations with police and political leaders, but there is no indication that the negotiators maintain influence over the larger movement.
- b. **There does not appear to be any overt direction being given between the Coutts blockade and the Ottawa "Freedom Convoy" organizers.** It is possible that private communication is happening, but the Coutts blockade does not appear to be operating in concert with the Ottawa convoy and there does not appear to be a hierarchical relationship between the two. The Coutts blockade seems to have been one of the spin-off support events for the Ottawa convoy that gained its own momentum and now appears to be self-supporting.
- c. **Individuals outside of the blockade location appear to be acting as entrepreneurs in organizing support and logistics.** Instead of blockade organizers placing requests for support and coordinating incoming supplies, external individuals appear to be using social media to detect the needs of blockade participants, create solutions and organize delivery. Attempts to contact blockade organizers by outsiders do not appear to have been met with a consistent point of contact or process to follow, and the connection between the blockade and outside supporters appears generally disorganized and driven by personal initiative.

2. TOWING COMPANIES:

- a. **Individuals on pro-blockade social media groups are organizing phone campaigns to threaten tow companies with financial repercussions, and to set up boycotts of companies they believe have acted in support of police.** People claiming to be tow company owners have posted in pro-blockade social media groups claiming that they do not support police action and will not be participating in any planned towing of vehicles. Similar claims have been published by media articles where tow operators have been interviewed, in addition to local tow company operators claiming that they are participating in the blockade itself.

3. SPIN-OFF ACTIONS:

- a. **Social media comments have repeatedly called for blockade supporters to block in police to prevent them from removing vehicles from the blockade site.** Law enforcement partners report that supporters have created their own blockades on nearby roads, although these currently appear to be restricted to the local area.
- b. **Law enforcement partners have reported that support convoys have bypassed (or possibly broken through) police blockades to deliver food, fuel and water to blockade participants.** Videos posted to social media have shown groups of agricultural machinery (tractors, etc) moving on roads or across country towards the blockade location.
- c. **In addition to coordinating supply deliveries, messages are being shared on social media promoting a decentralized blockade of highways throughout Alberta.** Most messages promote the use of agricultural equipment by farmers to block roads throughout the province while allowing emergency vehicles through. Some claim that "trucker leaders" have asked supporters to go out and independently block roads throughout the province. At this time, no specific indicators of planning to conduct these actions have been found and they appear to currently be aspirational.
- d. Other supporters have suggested less realistic solutions, such as resupply by helicopter or drone.

4. INTELLIGENCE GAPS:

- a. Identity of leaders within the blockade and their level of influence at the blockade site.
- b. Real-world support for decentralized blockade actions.

Law enforcement partners are currently re-organizing and consolidating intelligence activity, and we'll likely have more information with a higher confidence level available tomorrow.

 **Kelly Coffin** | Intelligence Officer
Intelligence Bureau - Provincial Security & Intelligence Office (PSIO)
Ministry of Justice & Solicitor General
Office: (780) 643 9244

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